

AN
A P O L O G Y

FOR

The Mysteries of the Gospel.

BEING

A SERMON Preached at *White-Hall*,

Feb. 16. 167²/₃.

BY *Wm. Ward.*

SETH, Lord Bishop of SARUM.

Printed by his Majesties Special Command.



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Printed by Andrew Clark, for James Collins. 1673.

ATOLY

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ROM. I. 16.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: For it is the power of God to Salvation, to every one that believeth.



He former part of this Text (being delivered in terms unusual) hath afforded matter of Disputation to Interpreters.

The Question is, Whether it be to be taken for a *Means* or to be understood simply, and plainly, according to the usual import and meaning of such expressions.

That St. Paul, so long after his Miraculous Conversion, (a little before his Appeal to *Cæsar*) drawing near to the finishing of his Course.

That St. Paul, after he had Planted the Gospel, from *Jerusalem* round about unto *Illyricum*, after the Rom. 15.19. Composing of all those excellent Epistles written

before his bonds whereof this Epistle to the Romans was the last.

That St. Paul (I say) after all this, should descend to so poor an Expression, as might insinuate, that there was something in the Gospel, whereof it was possible, that some of the Romans, might imagine that he ought to be ashamed.

(That in the Judgment of St. Paul the Gospel should administer occasion for the Anticipation and Amolition of so contemptible a Prejudice,)

It seems to many very improbable; and therefore they say that the words are a *Misnomer*, and that the Apostle in saying that he was not ashamed of the Gospel, intended to signify that he exulted and gloried in it.

1 Tim. 1. 11.

1 Cor. 4. 4.

3. 7.

10. 8.

Indeed, we find our Apostle, not only in his other Epistles (and in his Apologies) but in this Epistle to the Romans, often magnifying his Office, and Glorifying in the Ministry of the Gospel which he had received; He styles it the light of the glorious Gospel, a Ministry exceeding Glorious, and Professes that if he should boast of his Authority, he should not be ashamed.

Yet (with submission to better Judgments) I humbly conceive that he is not so to be understood in this place.

Though the Epistle was directed to those at Rome, which were already Christians; yet this passage was put in with reference to others, to whom the Epistle was to be communicated (persons not yet converted to Christianity.) To them who were already called

called to be Saints, whose Faith was spoken of throughout the world; to talk of not being ashamed of the Gospel, had been a *Misnomer* very incongruous.

But (on the other side) for him who (by his original Commission) was constituted the Apostle of *Act. 22. 21.* all the Gentiles, made a debtor to them all (as he *ver. 14.* says;) to the Wise as well as unwise, to the Greeks and Romans as well as the Barbarians.

That he, who in pursuance of this Commission, had already planted the Gospel amongst the more Barbarous Nations, from *Antioch* in Syria as far as *Act. 14.* *Lystra* and *Derbe*, Cities of *Lycaonia*; and among the Greeks, in all the chief Cities of *Macedonia* and *Achaia* (from *Jerusalem* round about unto *Illyricum*) so that nothing now remained but to Preach at *Rome* (as he speaks Emphatically) at *Rome* also.

That he, whose preaching was not in the way of *1 Cor. 2. 1.* humane wisdom or excellency of speech (in the way either of Rhetorical Harangue or Philosophical argumentation) intending to Preach at *Rome* (the Seat of the Empire of the world) the Resort of the Noble, the Mighty, and the Wise, of all those who in the phrase of our time, are styled the *Beaux esprits*, the Wits and Braveries, of the world.

Briefly, that *St. Paul* who knew the Prejudices which these men had against the Gospel, and with what Contempt and Scorn they generally looked upon it (as a Dispensation whereof a man ought to be ashamed.)

That *St. Paul*, who (as it appears by all his Epistles.

Epistles and Orations) well understood (the
 τὸ πρῶτον τῆς ἀξίως) the Congruity and decency of
 speaking or of writing ; Intending, before he should
 conclude, (after he should have evinced the Excel-
 lency of the Gospel) to take strength and confidence,
 Rom. 15. 17. and Glory in his Ministrations ; Being yet in his pro-
 amium only, whose office is (ἰδιότης) by a modest and
 smooth insinuation, to make way for his discourse
 which was to follow ;

I say, that in *this* place of his Epistle, he should
 take notice of the *Prejudices* which lay against the Go-
 spel, and plainly and clearly (without a *Meiosis*) An-
 ticipate and Obviate, the imagination that he ought
 to be ashamed of it ; This, I humbly conceive to be
 most agreeable to the *design* and *Character* of St. Paul,
 And, that according to this interpretation we ought
 here to consider,

I. A supposal in the Romans, intimating the Pre-
 judices against the Gospel. And therein,

1. A thing imagined ; that *Paul* would not adven-
 ture to Preach the Gospel at *Rome*.
2. The reason of the imagination, an Opinion
 that he would be ashamed.

II. A removal or Amolition of that supposal, inti-
 mating the Iniquity of those Prejudices : viz.

A Removal of

Ver. 15.

1. The thing that was imagined, I am ready to
 Preach the Gospel, even at *Rome*.

Ver. 16.

2. And of the imaginary reason of the supposition,
 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel.

III. The

III. The Grounds and Reasons of this Amotion.

And these are drawn from two heads and adjuncts of the Gospel:

1. Necessarily implied and presupposed, and that is *Veritatis evidentia*, (if the Gospel were not the truth of God it could not be the power of God.)
2. Explicitely and expressly proposed, and that is *Virtutis excellentia*, it is the Power of God to Salvation (and that *κατὰ μέτρον*) to every one that believeth. " *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.*

So that I am to speak of these two general Heads:

- I. Of the Prejudices against the Gospel.
- II. Of the Iniquity and Unreasonableness of those Prejudices.

From whence it will follow that we ought to Preach the Gospel, and not to be ashamed.

Concerning which things I shall not endeavour at a Rhetorical Harangue, but crave leave that I may be admitted to speak, in a plain and humble analytical and didactical way of discourse.

I. Then, I am to speak of those Prejudices against the Gospel, from whence it is (by some persons) imagined, that the Ministers of the Gospel ought to be ashamed of it.

And herein I shall

1. Shew

1. Shew that there always have been, and always will be such Prejudices against the Gospel.
2. Enquire what it is in the Systeme of the Gospel, which is the especial object of these Prejudices.
3. Then make a brief reflection upon the nature and symptomes of the Prejudices.
4. And upon the Characters of the persons most obnoxious to them.

1 First, That there always have been, and always will be, Prejudices against the Gospel (and an imagination in some persons, that Ministers and Christians ought to be ashamed of it) is so deplorably manifest, that I need not insist upon either the proof or declaration of it.

That it is, and hath been always so, it is not only the unhappy complaint of the present Age, but hath been of every Age and Generation since the first Promulgation of the Gospel ; And that it will be so, we have an infallible assurance from Christ and his Apostles ; That the latter days shall be times of Infidelity and departure from the Faith, that there will be Scoffers at the Gospel, and cruel Mockers, we have the assurance of the Apostles St Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude.

2 Tim. 3. 1.
2 Pet. 3. 3.
Jude 18.

Luke 18. 8.

That when the Son of man shall come to judge the World, he shall hardly find Faith on the Earth, we have the Prediction of our Lord Christ himself.

Briefly and summarily ! our Lord Christ in several places

places of the Gospel, declares and supposes, that many will be offended at him, that they will be ashamed of him, and of his words, both of his Person, and of his Gospel.

Mat. 23. 3.
Mar. 8. 38.

Our Apostle declares that he himself is not ashamed, Exhorts *Timothy* not to be ashamed, Commends *Epaphroditus* that he was not ashamed; *St. Peter* exhorts those that suffered for the Gospel not to be ashamed. If there had not been an imagination in the world that they ought to have been ashamed, to what end were all these Declarations, Commendations, Exhortations concerning being not ashamed?

2 Tim. 1. 8,
12, 16.
1 Pet. 4. 16.

2. I pass therefore to the second thing propounded, to enquire what is the special Object of these Prejudices, or what are those things contained in the Gospel, whereof (in an especial manner) it is imagined that we ought to be ashamed.

Though the whole System of the Gospel lies under Prejudices, yet not all parts of it alike, some more than other, and some by reason of the other.

The whole Gospel is generally dividable into

1. Historical Narrations.
- 2 Moral Institutions and motives.
- 3 Dogmatical Mysteries.

These are delivered sometimes distinctly and severally, and sometimes they are combined and mixed together.

That there was such a Person as Christ, that he was born of *Mary*, that *Joseph* was his reputed Father; The manner of his Life and of his Death, his

B

Actions,

Actions, and his Teachings, are matters merely Historical.

That this reputed Son of *Joseph* was indeed the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a Virgin, and the like, have in them a Combination of the Mystery together with the History of the Gospel.

[I stand not to shew, how the Morality is sometimes simply delivered, and sometimes in Combination with the Mystrious parts of the Gospel.]

1. Now concerning those parts of the Gospel which are merely and simply *Historical*, and *Moral*, I suppose they cannot be here intended ; Because that to such persons, as the Romans were, (men pretending to Reason and Philosophy) they afford no colour for an imagination that a Minister or Christian ought to be ashamed.

*In Sermon.
against Antiscriptu-
rists.

Supposing the truth of what is there delivered, (whereof * I have spoken heretofore) what was there in the Birth, or Life, or Death ; The Conversation, or Actions, (ordinary, or extraordinary) of Christ, or his Apostles, whereof in the opinion of a Philosopher, a Christian ought to be ashamed ?

Was it the meanness of Christ's Nativity ? That he was the reputed Son of *Joseph*, who was of a mean and despicable occupation ?

Was it that he lived an Ambulatory kind of life ? teaching and disputing concerning good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, in the Synagogues and in the Temple, and the Streets and Markets, and in the

Wilder-

Wilderness (every where) Preaching the Doctrine of the Kingdom ?

Or lastly, Was it because of the occasion and manner of his Death ? because he was Condemned, and Executed by his Country-men, upon an accusation of corrupting the People, and making an Innovation in Religion, upon pretence of holding intercourse with God ?

Every one of these circumstances had been coincident in *Socrates* long before the time of the writing of this Epistle to the *Romans*.

He was the Son of *Sophrontiscus*, as poor a man as *Joseph*, (a Carver of Images in stone) his Mother was a Midwife.

His Conversation was Ambulatory, discoursing and reasoning at all times, and in all places, (in *Academia*, in *Lyceum*, in *Forum*, in Places of walking, and of publick exercise ; (when he eat or drank, or played) in the Camp, the Market, or the Prison) with all the men he met withal, concerning Virtue and Vice, and the *summum bonum* ; concerning wisdom and folly. * And he had been Condemned and Executed by the *Athenians*, upon the very same pretences which were objected against our Saviour.

* Vide *Xenoph.* in *Socr. Apologia.*

Yet all these disadvantages had not hindred *Socrates* (at that time, after about 500 years) from the Admiration, and almost Adoration of all men pretending to Philosophy and Wisdom, not only amongst all the rest of the Gentile world, but even amongst the *Romans* also.

And therefore the mere *Historical* part of the Gospel could minister no colour of suspicion why a Minister or a Christian should be ashamed of it.

2. Moreover, the same may be said of those parts of the Gospel which are merely *Practical*, and *Moral*, (The Precepts concerning Piety, and Justice, and Temperance in all the several branches of them, and the Motives to them.)

The Morality of the Gospel infinitely excels the Institutions of any of the Heathen Philosophers, all that they could object against it, was its too great purity and holiness, that it puts a violence and stretch upon Humane Nature, causing men to strain after degrees of purity and sanctity unpracticable and unattainable. It excels all the Precepts and Institutes of the Jews, Christ made a *Δυσίκανον* even of the Moral Law of *Moses*, and tells us, that the Righteousness of Christians must exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the Apostle (comparing the entire Systems of the Mosaical and Christian Oeconomies in reference to Christian Duties and the Motives to them^c) justly pronounces, that the Christian hath received a better Covenant, founded upon better Promises.

3. It remains therefore, that the Peculiar and special Object of those Prejudicate imaginations (whereby it is concluded that Ministers and Christians ought to be ashamed) are the *Articles of mere Belief*, *Dogmatical Mysteries* of the Gospel.

At the expence of your time and patience (in a long

Mat. 5. 20.
Heb. 8. 6.

long discourse) to tell you what are the Mysteries of the Gospel, were to suppose, that (in compliance with the barbarity of later times) you had neglected to be instructed in your Catechism, and had need that one should teach you what are the first elements of Christianity. My design engages me no further than only to name them, and that also very briefly.

In the two first Chapters to the *Corinthians*, we find our Apostle handling this Argument, largely and *ex professo*.

And there he reduces the whole Mystery to two words, namely, *the Cross of Christ*, he tells them that he was sent to Preach and not to Baptize; that this was that which Christ sent him to Preach; And that he determined to know nothing else among them, but *Jesus Christ and him Crucified*, and in Chap 1. v. 23. he declares *this* to have been the occasion of the Scandal, taken both by Jews and Gentiles; *I Preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling block, &c.*

The Scandal taken, was against the *Mysteries* of the Gospel, and the *Nature*, and *Mediatorian Office*, the Character and Personal concernment of Christ, and work of Redemption by his blood spilt upon the Cross, are the two great and comprehensive heads to which the whole Mystery of the Gospel is easily, naturally, and immediately reducible.

The Justification, Sanctification, entire Oeconomy of the salvation of man, depends immediately upon the work of Redemption by the blood of Christ.

The

The value and efficacy of his blood, resolves into the Excellency of his Person, and of his Nature; That he was the Son of God the Father, Conceived by the Holy Ghost, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one.

So that in the last resolution, the Conjunction of the Divine and Humane Natures in the Unity of the Person of Christ, and the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Nature of the Godhead, is the *πρῶτον Μυστήριον* of the Gospel.

And this is also the *πρῶτον ὀκνῶν δαλιν*, that great thing whereof it is imagined that a Christian or a Preacher ought to be ashamed.

Which will be yet more evident if we shall make a brief reflection upon the Nature and Symptoms of the Prejudices against the Gospel, And the Character of the persons more especially obnoxious to these Prejudices.

3. Beside the consideration of Interest, (real or imaginary) and the disappointment of mens desires and expectations, (an ordinary eminent and predominant ingredient in the prejudices of all men) there are two things which (in men pretending to prudence and virtue, or to reason and understanding) are apt to create a distaste against any way of Institution, or any doctrine wherein they are supposed or presumed to be.

1. *τὸ αἰσχρὸν*, an Apprehension of Turpitude or dishonesty, either intrinsically contained in that which is propounded, or consequentially involved with it.

2. τὸ ἄτοπον or ἄλογον, an Apprehension of some absurdity or unreasonableness in it.

1. Of the former sort, are Principles of Atheism, Irreligion, Immorality, The Doctrines of *Diagoras*, who denied the being of God; of *Carneades*, concerning good and evil; of *Diogenes*, concerning Incest, &c. (which have an Intrinsic and immediate turpitude;) The Doctrine of *Epicurus* concerning the Mortality of the Soul, a consequential Principle of all Impiety, Injustice, and Debauchery, if that be the case, *Let us eat and drink, &c.*

1 Cor. 15. 32.

These are injurious to the Interest of mankind, and they put an indignity upon the practical reason and principles of men, and are apt to be distasteful and offensive; instances whereof there are very many among the Heathens, (as among others that of the *Athenians*, who banished *Protagoras*, and caused his Books to be burnt in the open Market-place because he wrote doubtfully concerning the being of a God) But as for these, it hath not been in the power of malice to fasten them upon the Gospel, or in the compass of mistake to suppose them in it; so that it hath been clearly exempt from this Prejudice.

2. The other thing that creates an aversion against any Doctrine is τὸ ἄτοπον or ἄλογον (an Apprehension of absurdity or unreasonableness in the things propounded) wherein the Wit and Theoretic Reason or Understanding of men takes it self (no matter whether it be justly or unjustly) to be affronted, and this is as distasteful as the former.

An Instance whereof we have in the sixth of St. John, where when Christ told those that followed him of eating his flesh and drinking his blood (speaking in a figure not obvious to their vulgar understanding) they cried out *σκληρὸς ἔστιν ὁ λόγος* (that that was a hard saying) and taking themselves to be abused they finally forsook him.

I say, that the Apprehension of *Moral* turpitude, or *Logical* absurdity are equally distasteful, But in their more peculiar Subjects, and Symptoms, and Aptitude to mistake and Prejudice, they differ.

The former aversion hath its peculiar seat and residence in Virtuous and Prudent men, (the *ἰσχυροὶ* and *σοφοὶ*) and discovers it self in Zeal and Indignation, as against things dangerous and pernicious; The later is subjected in persons, who are (or take themselves to be) men of Wit and Learning (the *σοφισταὶ* and the *λόγισται*) the Symptoms of it are scorn and contempt, as of things absurd and nonsensical, foolish and irrational.

And in matters of this nature men are more inclinable to fall into mistake and Prejudice than in the former.

The notions of *Truth* and *Falshood* lie more abstruse than those of *Good* and *Evil*, and men are more apt to be deceived in their wit, than in their honesty.

No truths are so liable to mistake and prejudice as the professedly *Mysterious*, and without controversy great is the *Mystery* of Godliness. The Ground of this Prejudice is an Impotency to distinguish be-

twixt Ἀποκρυφόν and Ἀφανές, ὀφθαλμικόν and Ἀλογον, betwixt Truth and Clearness, Obscurity and Absurdity, Being inconceivable and incredible, being incomprehensible, and being unaccountable.

4. This Impotency is an infirmity to which the Brisk and the sudden, the forward and impatient, the Talkative and disputatious, (all such as scorn the dulness of consideration, and think themselves above the drudgery of thinking) that is to say, the Wits and *Beaux esprits* are of all men living the most obnoxious.

And from hence it is, that by persons of this Character to be despised, hath always been the fortune of the Gospel.

The condition of the Gospel amongst our selves, I shall not in this place, at this time labour to declare, I come not hither to accuse my Nation; But that it was thus in the Apostles time we have sufficient assurance.

He tells us that the most eminent despisers (the *Contemptores legitimi*) of the Gospel, were the Σοφισταί and the ἑσθέρους τοῦ λόγου, and the συζητῶντες τῷ Αἰῶνι τῷ τῷ. The Tropical Rhetorician, and the Flaming Orator, the Jibing Satyrst, and Scurrilous Comedian, the Sophistical Philosopher, and Everlasting Disputant, the Conceited Scribe, and Pharisaical Opiniator. Where (saith the Apostle) is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this world? 1 COR. I. 20.

The entertainment which the Gospel found at the hands of such as these was generally that of scorn and contempt.

C

Speak-

Speaking in the person of men of this Character (whether Jews or Gentiles) our Apostle in the
 * 1 and 2 of compass of two * Chapters doth nine times call the
 1 Ep. to Cor. Mysteries of the Gospel foolishness, and foolish things, things weak, ignoble, and despised, and things which are not.

The sum of the whole Mystery of the Gospel is contained in two words, (*Christ Crucified*) I preach
 Chap. 1. 23. (saith he) *Christ Crucified, to the Jews a scandal, to the Greeks foolishness*; the opinion they had of it was that it was an absurd and a foolish dispensation, a dispensation whereof a Christian, a Preacher, ought to be ashamed.

Thus much of the first general part of my Discourse concerning the Prejudices against the Gospel.

II. I come now to the second part,

To shew the Iniquity and unreasonableness of these Prejudices.

And here I shall endeavour to evince two things.

1. That there is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed of their Prejudices.

2. That there is no reason for Christians or Ministers to be ashamed of the Gospel.

1. First, There is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed.

Because their Contempt of it doth not proceed from

from any Generous or Noble Principle or qualification, it comes not from height of Spirit or Wit, from depth of Reason or Judgment, from largeness of Learning or Knowledge.

But from the want of all these qualifications, and is finally resolved into an ungentile, and (if I may be permitted to speak plainly) a kind of Rustical Ignorance and want of Ingenuity.

In Acts 17. 11. St. Paul comparing the *Thessalonian* Jews with the *Bereans*, saith that the *Bereans* were more noble (*'Eurywisteroi*) because they did not precipitously, and temerariouly reject the Gospel, as the others did, but were diligent in searching of the Scriptures dayly, and in a strict enquiry concerning the Grounds and Motives to Belief alledged by the Apostles (whether they were of that weight which was pretended) whether they were so or no.

In matters of so great moment as the Gospel doth pretend to be (in reference to this world, and that which is to come) to despise, or to reject the Proposals, without a just consideration of them, and without an impartial and ingenious examination (and full understanding) of the Grounds and Reasons, upon which they are propounded, savours not of Prudence or Wisdom, Wit or Learning, Ingenie or Ingenuity; in one word it savours neither of a Gentleman, nor a Scholar.

Now that this is the Case in the Contempt of the Gospel, I think it will appear if we shall attentively consider,

1. What was the Judgment of Christ (who was the Author of the Gospel) concerning this matter.

2. The signal instances of the contempt and neglect of the Gospel mentioned in the Scriptures.

3. If we shall make a rational enquiry into the Principles and Postulata, into which the Contempt of the Gospel is finally resolved.

1. First, this will receive evidence from the Judgment of Christ himself, concerning the resolution of the rejection and contempt of the Gospel.

I suppose none will be so Jewish as to object, the bringing of Christ to be a Witness in his own behalf, seeing his Case is not the case of an ordinary witness, but resolves it self (as afterwards will be briefly shewed) into an attestation of the greatest credit.

I say then, that Christ himself (who knew what was in man, and needed not that any man should teach him) hath resolved the Contempt and rejection of the Gospel into want of understanding, and of due and ingenuous consideration, into Ignorance, and want of Candour and Ingenuity.

In the Parable of the Sower we find this Argument largely and profoundly handled by our Saviour, the Parable is three times delivered in the Gospel, and is very well known, so that I need not stand upon the declaration or repetition of it. The *parabolas* concerning the bad, (that is the high-way, the stony, the thorny.) and the good, (that is, the fruitful) ground, I shall not mention; He that shall harmonize the triple Narration, and Analyse the *Αἰτιασεις* of this

Mat. 13. 3.

Mar. 4. 3.

Luk. 8. 5.

this Parable, shall find, that our Saviour therein propounds and intimates the causes immediate and mediate; Mediate, nearer and remoter, of the Reception and rejection of the Gospel, whereof (as to the point in hand) the sum is this.

That the irregular endeavour after the attainment of temporal good things, and the avoidance of temporal Evils, The lust of the Flesh, the lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, the cares of the World, and Deceitfulness of Riches, the lust of other things, Pride and conceitedness of Wisdom, and other Carnal Interests, are the cause of the want of an attentive, and Patient, an ingenuous, and impartial consideration; And that the want of such a consideration, is the cause of the want of a thorow Understanding; And that the want of a thorow Understanding, this is the cause of the Contempt, or Rejection, or neglect of the Gospel.

In the Gospel of * St. Luke he resolves the causes of the Reception of the Gospel into honesty and goodness of heart (sincerity, and ingenuity) into a patient and constant attention to (hearing and keeping of) the word.

* Luk. 8. 15.
ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ
καὶ ἀγαθῇ κατ-
ήκουσεν καὶ κατε-
κράτησεν τὸ
λόγον.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew he resolves the whole matter into this one point of a perfect and thorow Understanding. The good ground, says he, is he that * bears the word and brings forth fruit with Understanding.

Mat. 13. 23.

* Ἀκούων καὶ
οὐκ ὀφρ.

A fair and honest, a Candid and ingenuous attention and Consideration, and a full Understanding, are.

are.

are the causes of the Reception ; Therefore an Attention hypocritical and unsincere, An ignoble ignorance, perverseness, and want of Candour and Ingenuity, are the Causes of the Contempt of the Gospel in the judgment of our Saviour.

2. The same also will further appear if we might be permitted to examine the several Instances of Contempt and Neglect of the Gospel, and so go thorow the various degrees of the Symptoms of Infidelity mentioned in the Gospel. I shall only touch them very briefly, and the heads of them are such as these:

1. The egregious hesitation or slowness in believing.
2. The refusal or rejection of the Gospel.
3. The offence or Scandal at it.
4. The quarrelling and disputation against it, and opposition to it.
5. The down-right scorn and contempt of it.
6. And lastly, the Persecution for it.

I say, if we might stay upon this Argument, it would appear, that as the Remoter causes of every Case, are easily reducible, to the lusts and interests mentioned by our Saviour, so the more Immediate Causes, whether in Jews or Gentiles, will be found to resolve into want of Ingenuity and Understanding.

1. The Apostles were *slow* in believing before the Resurrection and Mission of the Spirit. Christ tells them, that then they were fools, and slow of heart (inconsiderate and inadvertent, stupid and Disingenuous.)

2. The

2. The most eminent *Rejecters* of the Gospel were the Scribes and Pharisees: If we shall enquire after the Virtue or Modesty, Candour or Ingenuity of these men, we shall find them the most barbarous and Covetous, Proud and Supercilious, insincere and hypocritical in the world, (how often doth our Saviour charge them with all these things?) And if we enquire after their Knowledge and Understanding, we shall find them to have been mere Braggadoccios and pretenders; Christ often calls them blind Pharisees, and blind guides; he tells them, that they were blind leaders of the blind: that seeing they did see and not perceive, hearing they did hear and did not understand. Mat. 23. 16, 26.

3. In the sixth of *John* we find a mighty Scandal taken at the Gospel among the Auditors of Christ, they murmured, they strove amongst themselves, they finally revolted, upon a word, because they judged it to be, *σκληρόν ἄβυσσος*, a hard saying; They judged it so, because they did not understand it; they did not understand it, because they had not the Modesty and Meekness, Patience and Ingenuity to enquire the meaning of it, or to attend to that Explication which our Saviour made of that expression. Ver. 63.

4. In the 22 of *St Mathew*, and the parallel places, we find the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Lawyers, the Herodians, *coursing* our Saviour, *charging him with questions* about paying Tribute unto *Cæsar*, the Resurrection, the Great Commandment, &c. If now ye will judge of the Ingenuity of these men, consider there

there how thick and threefold, how furiously, and how rudely, they fall upon him, how stupidly they persist, every one judging that he was too hard for all the rest, (*and answered them well,*) but every one adhering to his own Conclusion; Consider, how before they set upon him, they took Counsel to entangle him, and sent spies to entrap (or trepan) him; And for their *Understanding*, consider how ignorant they were, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

Neither was it thus among the Jews only, but among the Gentiles also; nor only in these, but in the two remaining degrees of the down-right scorn, and the Contempt of the Gospel, and Persecution for it.

5. In the 26 of the *Acts* we find the opinion that *Festus* had concerning the Gospel, (with what contempt and scorn he speaks of it, how roundly he pronounces that *Paul* was mad.) If you will judge of his Ingenuity in pronouncing, by his skillfulness in understanding of the Gospel; Consider how profound an account of *Paul's* case, and of the Gospel he renders to *Agrippa*; how that it was a (trifling) question concerning the Jewish Superstition, and concerning one *Jesus* which was dead, whom *Paul* affirmed to be alive.

Ver. 32. In the 17 of the *Acts* we find the Athenians *Xenodorus*, making a mock at *Paul*, and scorning his Gospel as a most ridiculous thing; If you will know their manners and ingenuity, you may observe, that they

they condemned him for a Babler before they heard him speak, and if you will measure the depth of their Understanding of that which they despised, you may observe that as they imagined Jesus to be a strange God; so they understood * *Anastasis* (the Resurrection) to be a Goddess. He seemeth (say they) to be a setter forth of strange Gods, because he Preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection. Ver. 18.

6. The utmost degree of Contempt of the Gospel, is Persecution for it; and the highest imaginable instance of this, was the betraying and murdering of Christ himself; Concerning the Ingenuity or disingenuity of the contrivance, management, and execution of this prodigious Action, it were no less than madness to undertake to speak proportionally; And that this also proceeded not only from wickedness and want of Ingenuity, but from Ignorance and want of Understanding, we have an irrefragable assurance. Christ himself saith, that they knew not what they did; and our Apostle, that if they had understood themselves, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory. * Ibid.
Luk. 23 34.
1 Cor. 2. 8.

So that by all these instances, and many others of like nature, it doth appear, that (agreeably to the Sentence and Judgment of our Saviour) the Contempt of the Gospel is finally resolved into a *shameful Ignorance*, and want of Ingenuity; which will yet be more evident from Reason.

3. I come therefore in the third place to a consideration of the

(1) Principle into which the Contempt of the Gospel is resolved, and of D (2) The

(2) The *Postulata* upon which it is grounded: And from the absurdity of one; and the Unreasonableness of the other, to make it appear; that *there is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed.*

1. From the consideration of their Principle: After what hath been spoken in the former part of this Discourse; and what is attested by experience, I take it for granted,

1. That the *special Object* of the Contempt of the Gospel is the *Mystical* part of it.

2. That the immediate reason of the Contempt of these Mysteries is an Imagination; or Opinion of the *falsehood* of them.

3. That this Opinion of the falsehood of them, is derived from the *Obscurity and Difficulty* of them.

Because they are Inexplicable, Incomprehensible, Unintelligible, they conclude them to be false and incredible, merely Fantastical and Chimerical Imaginations, and so to be despised.

So that the Principle into which these Scorners do resolve themselves, is this; That whatsoever is Inexplicable, Incomprehensible, Unintelligible is (by Philosophers at least and Wise men) to be accounted incredible, fantastical, fictitious, and so to be despised.

If this be not the Ratiocination, and this the Principle of those *Virtuosi*, of whom we are speaking, I desire to be better informed. But if it be, I would intreat them to stand a little, and consider whether they are going, and whither this Principle and reasoning will lead them.

John Bayly

Will it not lead them to cast off not only Christianity, but even all natural Religion, and force them (with the wise man in the Psalmist) to say in their hearts that there is no God? Because the *Nature*, and *Essence*, and *Attributes* of God are *inexplicable*, *incomprehensible*, and *unintelligible*; He dwells in a light which no mortal eye can approach unto, such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for us, and we cannot attain unto it.

But this I fear they do not account an inconvenience, but rather that this is that they would be at.

Again therefore, I entreat them to consider;

Will not this Principle lead them to deny the most obvious things in nature? Will it not take away the very grounds of all that wisdom, to which they do pretend, (the force even of Experiment and Demonstration?)

Nay, Will it not finally bring upon themselves, that horrible inconvenience, that they are not to be offended if it shall be doubted or affirmed that they are not such Wits as they pretend?

The most obvious things in Universal Nature, are Continued Quantity, and Local Motion: These are either infinitely divisible, or they are not. Will they deny this Disjunction, (and say, that they neither are so, nor not so?) Or will they make choice of either Member? Will they clear the difficulties that are in it? Or answer the Objections that may be made against it?

I presume they may have heard of that famous

Argument of Zeno (*Æliates*) called *Achilles*, How whilst that mighty Disputant (by the impossibilities and absurdities on either side) was demonstrating that Local Motion was a thing impossible, one of his Auditors rose up and silently and sliely walked about the School, and so confuted him.

The most pervious, most clear, and comprehensible of all humane Sciences are the pure and unmix'd Mathematicks, yet even in Geometry and Arithmetick how many things are forceably concluded to be true, which are inexplicable, unimaginable, incomprehensible? I shall instance in a very few; So few as not to need an Apology to the unlearned in those Sciences: So trivial, as not to admit of an Explication to the Learned.

That the least imaginable space should be equal to another (upon the same Base of the same Altitude) whose sides are protracted in *infinitum*, or a Finite greater than an Infinite. The equality of all Circular Angles of Contact. The everlasting approximation and impossible concurrence of Asymptots. The Affections of surd and irrational Quantities, &c. are undeniably demonstrated to be true, yet all these (and many more) are *inexplicable, incomprehensible, unintelligible*.

They say they cannot explicate or imagine, (they cannot conceive or comprehend) the Mystery of the Trinity, and Unity of the Godhead, and therefore they despise it as a mere fictitious imagination.

Do they therefore clearly understand, and fully comprehend, and can they express and explicate the Affections

Affections of Unity and Trinity in Numbers? That there should be a Quantity in Nature (one, and not another) which with its infinite * ascending powers * $q.c.qq.c.c.$ and † descending roots are all of them equal, or rather one and the same among themselves? Can they explicate, or imagine, or comprehend any one of the infinite potential roots of the Number three? † $\sqrt{q}.\sqrt{c}.$ $\sqrt{qq}.\dot{c}c.$ $\sqrt{q}.\sqrt{c}.\dot{c}c.$

They say, they cannot understand how Christ should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin, and therefore they deride it.

Can they therefore understand how they themselves have been conceived, and born, and nourished up? And are they able to explain how, and by what progress from a little water spik upon a too luxurious ground there should spring forth such a Race of Titans, such a Gigantic brood of fighters against Heaven, of Scoffers at Religion?

Briefly, they say they cannot comprehend how God and Man should be one Christ, and therefore they Contemn the Gospel, and the Believers of it.

Can they therefore understand how the reasonable soul and flesh should be one man?

Either they themselves consist of two natures (the one Corporeal, the other spiritual and incorporeal) or they do not. If they have nothing in them Incorporeal, can they understand and explain how senseless Atoms, how stupid matter, and Local Motion should work themselves up to Sense and Cogitation, Reflection and Discourse, to Wit and Gallantry? (so as to make Jest and Ballads upon the Gospels.)

If they consist not only of a Body, but of a Soul (a spiritual soul) also; Can they explain by what ~~ways~~ these two natures have been brought together; by what bands and ligaments they are united, and how the Communication betwixt them is performed? In one word, Can they explicate the Phenomena of Sense, Imagination, Memory, Reason, Wit and Bravery?

If they are able to perform these things, let the world be made happy by their labours, and let them receive the Pæans, and Acclamations, the Crowns and Garlands denied to all that were before them. But if they must be forced to confess that all these things are inexplicable, unimaginable, unintelligible, and incomprehensible, and will yet continue to despise the Mysteries of the Gospel only for that reason, because they are inexplicable, unintelligible, incomprehensible, let them not be offended at a poor despised Minister of the Gospel, if he shall declare and testify to all the World, that these are not the *Wits*, or *Beaux Esprits*, or *Fort Esprits*; that they are Flesh and not Spirit, mere ordinary mortal Wights as others are; that all their boasting is but empty noise, and all they have to shew, is a mere *Deceptio visus*; that they may be Masters of some devices that are pretty, skilful in the Arts and Mysteries of Circulation and disguise, but they are not such dreadful *Archimagos*, such mighty Conjurers as they pretend. Let them therefore abandon their unreasonable Principle, and be ashamed.

2. But secondly, as is the Principle upon which they
contemn,

contemns, such are their *Postulata*, (the *Postulata* or *Demands* as the Philosophers and Mathematicians call them) that is to say, the terms or demands upon which they pretend that they would cease to despise the Gospel, and for want of which they do contemn it.

Those of what are reducible to two heads: noisibly

1. Philosophical Demonstration. Or

2. The sight of Miracles, Signs, and Wonders (as their demand)

This is the province of the *Wit* of these times; if the truth of the Mysteries of the Gospel might be proved to them by Demonstration, or if they might see Signs they would believe. This was the pretence at the time of the writing of my Text, *1 Cor. i. 23.*

The Jews required a Sign, the Greeks (i. e. the Gentiles) sought after Wisdom, (i. e. the *Philosophical*) and because they were disappointed of these, the Mystery (of Christ Crucified) was to the Jews a Scandal, to the Greeks foolishness. For brevity let us name these two

1. The Grecian or Philosophical,
2. The Judaic or Semiotical.

Now that the former of these proceeds from Ignorance, and want of learning and Understanding; the latter from Pride and Arrogance joined with a blockish Supidity. That the former is blinding, the latter disinjenuous, that both of them are irrational and absurd is evident.

And first, for the Grecian *Postulatum*,

In

In the case of any Doctrine or question, to refuse a proof that is Cogent, and sufficient, (the only proof whereof a thing is capable) and to hanker or seek after a Proof impossible, or improper, (such as implies a Contradiction, or such as the nature of the question will not bear;) This (I say) proceeds from Ignorance, from want of Learning and Understanding, and this is the case of the Grecian or Philosophical *Postulatum*.

To give a rational or Philosophical Demonstration of the truth of the Gospel, there are but three ways imaginable in nature: By Arguments, either,

1. *A Priori*, from the common Principles of Intelligence. Or
2. *A Posteriori*, from experiment and sensible observations.

And this later way of arguing must be drawn either.

1. From instances of things Novel and Anomalous in Nature, things purposely designed for such Arguments: Or else

2. It must be taken from the common and ordinary, the standing and perpetual Phenomena of Nature.

A Demonstration *a posteriori* by particular Instances of the Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, purposely designed for that end; was the proof offered by Christ and his Apostles; *This they rejected*; to prove particular Mysteries, Mysteries hidden from Ages, (and so declared and promised to be by the Promul-

gers of them) by general and perpetual Phenomena of Nature, is in nature impossible to perform, and senseless to require: To prove any thing concerning the Essence and Nature of God *per causas*, by Arguments *a Priori* supposes causes precedent to the Essence of God himself, and implies a Contradiction; So then, the Grecian or Philosophical *Postulatum* proceeds from Ignorance and want of Learning, and is at best disingenuous, and Theoretically absurd.

2. Again secondly, (concerning the Judaical or Semeiotal *Postulatum*) After numerous, or rather innumerable Attestations by Signs and Wonders notoriously known (and by themselves acknowledged) or sufficiently and authentically proved, or delivered down by uncontrollable and irreprovable Tradition, yet still to demand and require more Signs, Signs of their own Election, accompanied with Circumstances of their own prescription; Is not this to tempt and limit the Almighty? To make themselves Arbiters of the Emanations of his Power and Wisdom? To suppose that those ought to be subservient to their wanton curiosity? Is it not to expect that God himself should Lacquey after them, to make him a doer of Tricks at their senseless and impudent demand? Is not this an Asinine and an impious stupidity? A composition of the highest degrees of Intellectual and Moral Absurdity which is imaginable?

Now (therefore) that this was, and is, (and to the end of the world must ever now be) the case of the Jewish or Semeiotal *Postulatum*, is also plain and evident.

In Confirmation of the Gospel, Christ and his Apostles wrought far more (and more considerable) Signs and Wonders, than before (or since) that time were ever wrought since the creation of the world, yet all this will not content them: Notwithstanding all this *αὐτὸν αἰτῶν*, (they require a sign) the meaning whereof is better interpreted by their Practise and behaviour to our Saviour than by the Dictionary; And of this their behaviour I shall only produce two or three instances.

In the sixth of *John* we find that Christ fed 5000 men with five Loaves and two Fishes, and when they had seen the Miracle, they were so taken with it, that they * said that he ~~was that Prophet which should come,~~ and they would have taken him by force and made him a King.

But the very next day, these very men, that had seen, and felt, and tasted, of the Miracle (because he told them that they followed him for the Loaves) take a miss at him, they pirke up themselves, and come boldly and malepertly to him, saying, * What sign shewest thou, that we may see and believe? What dost thou work? As if the former Miracle had not been now a sign.

When Christ hung upon the Cross, the Noble and the Mighty, the Grave and Wise amongst them, (the chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders) came, and offered him a bargain, if he would then (just then) come down from the Cross they would believe; but our Lord Christ had just then something else to do.

* Ver. 14.
αὐτὸν αἰτῶν
ἐμὲν.

Ver. 15.

Ver. 30.
* καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν
σημεῖον.

Mat. 27. 40,
41. 42.

In the eighth of *Mark* the Pharisees came forth, and began to question him (*αἰνῶν*, to cavil, and dispute with him) *αἰτῶν σημεῖον*, (requiring a sign) seeking of him a sign from Heaven tempting him; They would have (and that presently upon the spot) a sign, not *αἰσάντων*, but *τίσιν*, or that which is properly *ἐκ νεφελῶν* not from Wind, or Sea, or Earth, but from Heaven; not that they intended to be his Disciples; but for a trial of his skill and ability; was not this a Gallant and a Wise, a Noble and a Worthy *Postulatum*? Could it chuse but move him to compliance? This moved him indeed, to comply so far with his own design, as to promise them a sign; the sign of the Prophet *Jonas* (that irrefragable *σημεῖον* of his Gospel) which should render them inexcusable; But though he was meek and lowly of heart, the soft and gentle Lamb of God, so that he suffered himself to be accused, condemned, buffeted, and spit upon, and yet held his peace (as a Lamb that is dumb so opened he not his mouth) Yet the nobleness and ingenuity of this *Postulatum* kindled a fire within him, so that he spake with his tongue. This moved him to scorn and indignation, so that in effect he called them bastards for their labour, telling them that they were (no sons of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, but) a wicked and Adulterous Generation; and that no sign should be given them but the sign of the Prophet *Jonas*. Vet. 11. vide Mat. 16. 1, 4. 12. 38, 39. Luk. 11. 16, 29, 30. Vide Jo. 4. 48. Mat. 12. 38, 39.

I suppose I shall need to say no more concerning the absurdity and unreasonableness of the Jewish or Semeiotical *Postulatum*. And

I have now done with the former part of my undertaking, which was to endeavour to make it appear, That the Contemners of the Gospel have reason to be ashamed of their Prejudices.

2. I come now to the second, which is the last part of what I have propounded, viz. to shew,

That there is no reason for Christians or for Preachers to be ashamed of the Gospel;

And that upon two Considerations :

1. *Propter veritatis Evidentiam.*

2. *Propter virtutis Excellentiam.*

The former of which is implied (if it were not the truth of God, it could not be the Power of God.)

The later is expressed, *For it is the Power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.*

The evidence of the Truth is so great that whosoever duly considers it, will certainly believe the Gospel.

The Virtue and Excellency of the Gospel is so great, that whosoever truly believes the Gospel shall infallibly be saved.

1. First, I am to speak of the Evidence of the truth of the Gospel. But because it is here only implied, and because I have * formerly employed my poor endeavours upon that Argument, I shall only briefly touch upon it.

The Mysteries of the Gospel, though they are inexplicable and inconceivable, yet are they not incredible, though incomprehensible, yet they are not unaccountable; Nor was the Author and finisher of the Christian faith so severe upon the understanding

* Serm.
against Antiscript.

of his followers, as to exact a Belief without a sufficient proof and Demonstration of the truth of that which he delivered.

Though he would not offer at the Grecian way (which he knew to be impossible to grant, to be absurd and unreasonable to require (yet he would afford that Demonstration whereof it was capable (a Demonstration properly so called, accommodate to the Understanding of all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, Noble and Ignoble, Learned and Unlearned) *ἀποδείξαι τῷ πᾶσι* &c.

He that refused to gratify the impudent Scribes and Pharisees in their way, would not leave the truth of the Gospel undemonstrated in his own.

And of the truth of all the Mysteries which he delivered; this is the *Analemma Catholicum*, the Common, the Universal, the Comprehensive demonstration.

He that made himself the Son of God (as the Jews express it) That said he was one with God (*I and the Father are one*) that he was in the Father, and the Father in him; That declared the Mission and Emanation of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and that always spoke of him as a person distinct; And that these three are one. Joh. 10. 30.
14. 11.

In a word; He that was the Author of these and all other Mysteries whereof we have been speaking, did not put the issue of believing upon his *Ἀυτίς*, but upon an undeniable and unrefusable Criterion.

If I do not the works of my Father believe me not; but if Joh. 10. 38.

if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, (*his opus & miracula*) that ye may know (by Demonstration) as well as believe, that I am in the Father, and he in me.

He did not only bear witness to himself, (although he died in testimony of his Doctrine) He had not only the glorious Company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble Army of Martyrs for his Witnesses ; But he called Heaven and Earth to witness ; He subpoena'd whatever was in Heaven, and Earth, and in the Sea, and in all deep places, to bear testimony to him.

There were three that bore witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, those three which he affirmed to be one. The Angels ministred unto him ; The Devils trembled and fled before him ; Plants and Animals, the Wind and Sea obeyed him ; The Stars in their courses, or rather out of their courses militated for him. To give Testimony to *Consummatum est*, at the time of his Death, the Sun was eclipsed, the Moon being at the Full. To indicate the place of his Nativity, at the time of his Birth a new Star was made on purpose. Health and Sicknes, Life and Death, and Hades, gave in their testimonies by their obedience to his word. Yet once more, he shook the Heavens, and sent down the Holy Spirit upon his followers : he shook the Earth also, he tore the Rocks and opened the Graves, and at his powerful voice the bodies of the Saints arose ; And least it should be said, He raised others but himself he could not raise. As
he

he finished the great Mystery of Christianity by his Death, so also he proved the truth of it by his Resurrection; As he died for our Sins, so he rose again for our Justification, for our Justification in the Belief of that, and all other, the Mysteries of Christianity. Rom. 4. 24.

These, and many more, are heads of Arguments, which whoever duly considers and understands, will certainly believe the Gospel *propter Veritatis Evidentiam*.

2. It remains only to shew, that whosoever doth truly believe the Gospel, shall infallibly be saved, *Propter Bonitatis, or Virtutis Excellentiam*; Because it is the power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.

In speaking of which Argument, I need not go about to prove, that the Power of the Gospel is the Power of God, (in which respect it is called the (a) Hand or (b) Arm of the Lord, (c) the Sword of the Spirit, (d) the Grace of God, bringing salvation, and the like.) a Act. 11. 22.
b Isa. 53. 1.
c Rom. 10.
16.
Eph. 6. 17.
d Tit. 2. 11.

Neither shall I stand upon a Comparison of the Gospel, with the Greecanical or Judaical Institutions, (a man may believe all that ever was written by Philosophers, and yet doubt whether there is, (or can be) such a thing as Salvation, yea or no. A man may believe, whatever is explicitly and expressly delivered in the Law of Moses, and yet not be saved) But my intention is (barely and nakedly) this, By a short Reflexion upon the Way and Method of the Actions of Mankind, and the Discoveries and Contents of the Gospel (well known to those that hear me) to manifest the truth of this Proposition, *That, every man that believeth*

* κατὰ τὴν ἐν
τῇ καρδίᾳ.

Luk. 8. 15.

ἐκ τῆς ἐν τῇ
καρδίᾳ.

Rom. 1. 28.

the Gospel (i.e. that truly and actually * abides in that belief) shall infallibly be saved.

Because whosoever frames his Actions according to the Rules and Principles (the Precepts and Prescriptions) of the Gospel, shall infallibly be saved. And because, it is of the nature of man, to frame his Actions according to his Actual and persevering Judgment and Belief.

The Nature and Essence of man consists in his Understanding; and for a man not to follow the steadfast and constant, the actual and final dictate of his Understanding, is impossible in Nature, and indeed implies a Contradiction.

He that believes, that there is neither God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell, Salvation nor Damnation; And that he hath not an Immortal Soul (i.e.) a Soul to save; such a man (If at least he hath attained to those great accomplishments of Rudeness and Incivility) will make it his business to fill up his measure of Debaucheries, and Impieties; will think it Brave (perhaps) and Witty, to Blaspheme God, and scoff at Religion; will make it a matter of Gallantry and noble Courage and Resolution, to challenge God to damn him, or bid the Devil take him body and soul; will spend his time in Revelling and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness; Expecting and hoping to dye like a beast, he will be sure to live like one; And in Conclusion will find himself disappointed of this glorious hope (this goodly, noble, manly expectation) and that his Miscrancy and the error of

of his Judgment hath betrayed him into eternal misery.

Whilst (on the other side) he that believes the Declarations, and Promises, and Threatnings, of the Gospel, will have his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

He that firmly and stedfastly believes, that the Soul which Actuates his body is an Immortal Being (a subsistence which shall and must endure to all eternity ;)

That after Death he must appear before the Tribunal of God and Christ, to answer for the things done in the body; 2 Cor. 5. 10.

That from thence he shall be transmitted to a state either of Eternal Happiness, or Eternal Misery; either to be entertained (in the Vision of God, in the fellowship of Saints and Angels) with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory; Or secluded from the sight of God, and treated with the Devil and his Angels, with torment unconceivable, unexpressible, and that to all Eternity.

This man, if he might gain all the Profits, and Honours, and Pleasures, if he might decline all the Afflictions of this world, will not lose his own Soul: *Frustra blanditiæ venitis ad hunc, frustra nequitiae venitis ad hunc.* Considering that light and momentary things bear no proportion to the exceeding weight and moment of those which are Eternal, he will forthwith endeavour to lay hold upon eternal Life, and make haste to escape the Wrath to come; And to that end he will devour all difficulties, and neglect no means or opportunities.

F

He

He that believes, that the only way to happiness is the way to holiness; That without holiness no man shall see God; That no unclean thing shall enter there; That the Impious, the Unjust, the Intemperate, the Lascivious (continuing so) shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This man will endeavour to purifie himself, to mortifie all his carnal lusts and affections, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

Again, he that believes and considers the Corruption and Impotence of his natural Condition, and the design of Christs coming into the world, what he hath already done, and what he is still in doing for him;

How that himself (and every man) is by nature a child of wrath, that Sin reigns in his mortal body, that he lies under a bondage from which he cannot redeem, a Guilt from which he cannot acquit himself;

That no flesh is justified in the sight of God;

Whosoever, I say, doth believe this concerning himself; and (on the other side) concerning Christ, that to this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, * that he might save sinners; † That the world through him might be saved;

That to this end (and this end only) he descended from Heaven; This was the end of his Conversion upon Earth, his Life and Doctrine, his Preaching and Example; This was the end of his Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Session at the

Eph.2.3.

Rom.7.24.

Rom.3.20.

* 1 Tim.1.

15.

† Joh.3.17.

the Right hand of God ; That by the sufferings of his Life, and the inestimable value of his Blood, the world might be *Justified and Redeemed from the Guilt of their sins, rescued from the miseries of the world to come.*

And that by the operation of his Doctrine, and Example, and the power of his Intercession, the world might be *sanctified, Delivered from the Dominion of sin, purified and prepared to be admitted to the Vision of the most holy God, Fruition of the Life to come.*

I say, that the man that *firmly, and stedfastly, and actually* believes these things, will not (nay, indeed that he cannot) neglect so great Salvation ; That he wil not trample upon the blood of the everlasting Covenant, or despise the Spirit of Grace, 'or Crucifie afresh the Lord of Glory, and put him to an open shame. But that for his continual cleansing, from his past transgressions, he will dayly resort to the fountain which Christ hath opened for sin and for uncleanness, offering and presenting his head and his heart (his mind and his affections) to the blood of sprinkling ; And that for the obtaining of preventing, and following Grace, to preserve him from lapsing for the time to come, He will throw himself dayly at the feet of that High Priest, which is sensible of his Infirmities, and which sits at Gods Right hand, making Intercession for him, and with sighs and unutterable groans he will implore the Assistance of that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities :

And that continuing, and persevering in this Course, (by the Grace of God which never faileth

them that seek him) he will certainly conform himself to the Commands of Christ, and compose himself to his Example, till at length he be transformed to his Image; *He will add to his Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge* — and so onwards; He will go on from strength to strength until he appear before God in Glory.

Tit. 2. 12.

I say, that such a man, by denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living Soberly, and Righteously, and Godly in this present world, will work out his Salvation with fear and trembling, and in the end of his days will *certainly and infallibly attain to the end of his hopes*, namely, the *Salvation of his soul*. So that the Gospel is indeed the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation to all men; It is the power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.

TO come therefore to a Conclusion: Judg now in your selves Brethren, and judg Righteous Judgment; Is this a Gospel which is to be despised? A Dispensation whereof a Minister or a Christian ought to be ashamed? Are the Mysteries of this Gospel to be derided and drolled upon? To be travestied or turned into *Burlesque* or *Macaronique*? Is this to be a Brave and a Gallant person? A Spark and a Wit? Or is it indeed to have never a spark of Wit or Gallantry?

Men, Brethren, and Fathers; If the time, and your patience, and my strength would bear it, I would take unto me boldness, and freely speak unto you concerning the Gospel of our Saviour, I would Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort.

I would

I would severally and distinctly address my self to every sort, and every Degree of those that hear me, Ecclesiastical and Civil, Young and Old, Wise and Unwise, Noble and Ignoble.

I would speak unto you young men of the Clergy, that you would not be offended at the Mysteries of the Gospel or think it a matter of Wit or of Learning, either to despise or to go about to mend them.

That you will neither be Drolled nor Disputed, Cajoled, nor faced out of your Religion, or suffer the *Mauvais hont* (the evil shame) to be put upon you.

That you will not believe that it hath been only dull formality, a want of the smartness of your Wit, or depth of your Learning, which hath retained your Fathers and Predecessors, in the belief and the Profession of the plain, and simple Articles of the Catholick Faith. Be not deceived Brethren; *Vixerunt fortes ante Agamemnona*——

Be not seduced by those who pretending to remove the Scandal of the Cross of Christ (which thing St. Paul counted an absurdity in Christianity) Gal. 5. 11. would rob you of a most divine and excellent Religion, and substitute in its place a rotten and depraved Philosophy; Those I mean who never have been able with all their Wit, Reason, and Learning, to explicate or comprehend the Mysteries or Mechanics of a Mite, or of a Flea, of a Plant or Stone, or any one of the innumerable things which are before them, and yet they take upon them to controul the plain literal, designed and reiterated Declarations of Christ.

Christ and his Apostles concerning the Mysteries of the Godhead. Those who Gramaticizing pedantically, and criticising spuriously, upon a few Greek Particles or words would cozen the world of the benefit of the blood of Christ, and Christ himself of his Divinity; and put him off with a fantastical and Poetical Apotheosis.

I would speak unto you *Fathers*, because ye have known the Father and the Son, ye understand the effect and consequence of the Mysteries of the Gospel to the Salvation of men, that ye will continue to strive earnestly to retain that faith (which is thought by some to be upon the wing, that Faith) which was once delivered to the Saints.

Act. 17. 28. I would speak unto you (*οἱ σοφοὶ*) *Wise men or Philosophers*; Paul speaking to the men at Athens, puts them in mind of a saying of a Poet of their own; I would call to your Remembrance a Saying of a Philosopher of our own, (a Philosopher of great renown) which is to this effect: That a profound consideration of the reason, and comprehension of the circumstances of things (a deep dose of Philosophy) will make a man Religious; And that the contempt of Religion is an infallible argument of one that is a smatterer only, and half-witted.

I would speak unto ye *Nobles*, that ye would be noble as the *Bereans* were; That ye will search, examine, and consider, whether the case of the Gospel be such as hath been represented, yea or no: And then I am sure ye will continue zealously and vigorously to support the Gospel.

I would take heart and courage, and improve in an humble confidence, so far as to prefer a Petition to King, Lords, and Commons (the Noble, the Mighty, and the Wise) that (at this time especially) they will be careful of Religion, and tender of the Interests of the Gospel.

I would humbly endeavour to bring to remembrance, who it is by whom Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice; And what it is to be *Defender of the truly Antient, Catholick and Apostolick Faith.*

I would endeavour to Demonstrate that neither Forts nor Castles, Armies nor Navies, Arms nor Ammunition, Money nor men, (to say nothing of Allies or Confederates, or the Staff of Egypt) are so powerful a support of the Crowns of Princes as the Gospel, Nay, not as a few lines of this one Epistle of our High Priced Galilean (as the Scoffers have been wont to call him) duly imbibed into the Souls and Consciences of men, namely, that saying at the beginning of Chap. 13 *Let every soul be subject to the Higher Powers,* Rom. 13. *for there is no power but of God, the Powers that be, are* 1, 2, &c. *Ordained of God* — *And they that Resist shall receive to themselves Damnation;* the belief of this would be sure to compose the minds of all Dissenters so as to keep peace and obedience at home.

And the belief of that which follows would defend us from our enemies abroad; this would raise Taxes and Contributions, Subsidies and Royal Aides, procure all things necessary for the maintenance of Just Wars abroad; For for this cause also pay ye tribute, Ver. 6, 7. *because*

because they are *Christs Ministers*, &c. So powerful and useful is the Gospel, where it is believed, to maintain all the parts and Interests, and to command all the succours and necessary supplies of Government, to bring fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute belongeth.

Wherefore I would not fear humbly to make an Application in the words of King David: *Be wise now therefore O ye Kings, be learned ye that are Judges of the Earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce unto him with reverence; kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way.*

But I can only be permitted to make one common and promiscuous Application, to high and low, rich and poor, one with another, namely, To charge upon your memory (and pray that it may rest upon my own) one saying of Christ himself, that dreadful saying in Mark 8. "*If any one shall be ashamed of me, or of my words in this adulterous and sinful Generation: Of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with his holy Angels.*"

And, without any Apology for my boldness or indiscretions, to conclude in the words of the Text:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: For it is the power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.

FINIS.